

# DAILY RITUALS

Himalayan Art in Practice





**For centuries, the Himalayas have been viewed by many as a secret enclave**

**of mystery.** Known as the home of legendary Shangri-la and reincarnated lamas, these mountains seem to contain traditions and wisdom that are not easily comprehensible to outsiders. The goal of *Daily Rituals: Himalayan Art in Practice* is to dispel some of these misconceptions through a presentation of a select group of objects that have been a part of the daily life of inhabitants of the Himalayan region.

Drawing primarily on artworks from Pacific Asia Museum's permanent collection, this exhibition provides visitors with a glimpse into the life of laypeople, monks, and gentleman scholars living in the Himalayas from the 14th to the 20th centuries. These objects were used regularly, if not everyday, by individuals in the region. The finely-worked surface of a gilt iron pen case illustrates the importance given by artisans and patrons to bringing beauty to everyday objects, even utilitarian equipment. A cotton apron painted with the wrathful face of a protective deity and adorned with a lattice-like net of bone reveals the practical components





Detail, *Pen Case*, Tibet, 14th-15th c., iron, gilt, Museum Purchase with Funds Provided by The Collectors' Circle, 2005.46.2AB

of a monk's tantric, or esoteric, Buddhist practice during the monastery's religious rituals. A bronze chörten, or dome-shaped Buddhist reliquary shrine, demonstrates the shared iconography in Buddhist cultures. Known as a stupa in South Asia and a pagoda in East Asia, these architectural forms link diverse landscapes and provide continuity in the transmission of Buddhism.

Pacific Asia Museum is fortunate to have an extensive collection of Himalayan materials in its holdings that gives visitors a clear sense of the great visual beauty of the paintings and sculpture for which the region is known. *Daily Rituals* seeks to enhance this appreciation by emphasizing the objects' past use by individuals not so different from ourselves, sharing concerns of work, family and religion. Through object groupings and accompanying text and images, the exhibit provides the visitor with a new way to experience Himalayan art and to imagine life there not as unknowable and completely foreign, but as approachable and comprehensible.

*Bridget Bray, Exhibition Curator*





*Dharmatala*, Tibet, 16th–17th, bronze, gilt,  
Gift of the Nancy King Collection, 2001.1.10

Cover: *Ritual Apron*, Tibet, c.1700, cloth, bone, and pigment,  
Gift of the Nancy King Collection, 2001.1.45

**ADMISSION:** \$7 adults, \$5 students/seniors. Children 11 and under free.  
**PARKING** in the museum lot on the corner of Los Robles and Union.



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